DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 455 979 RC 022 682

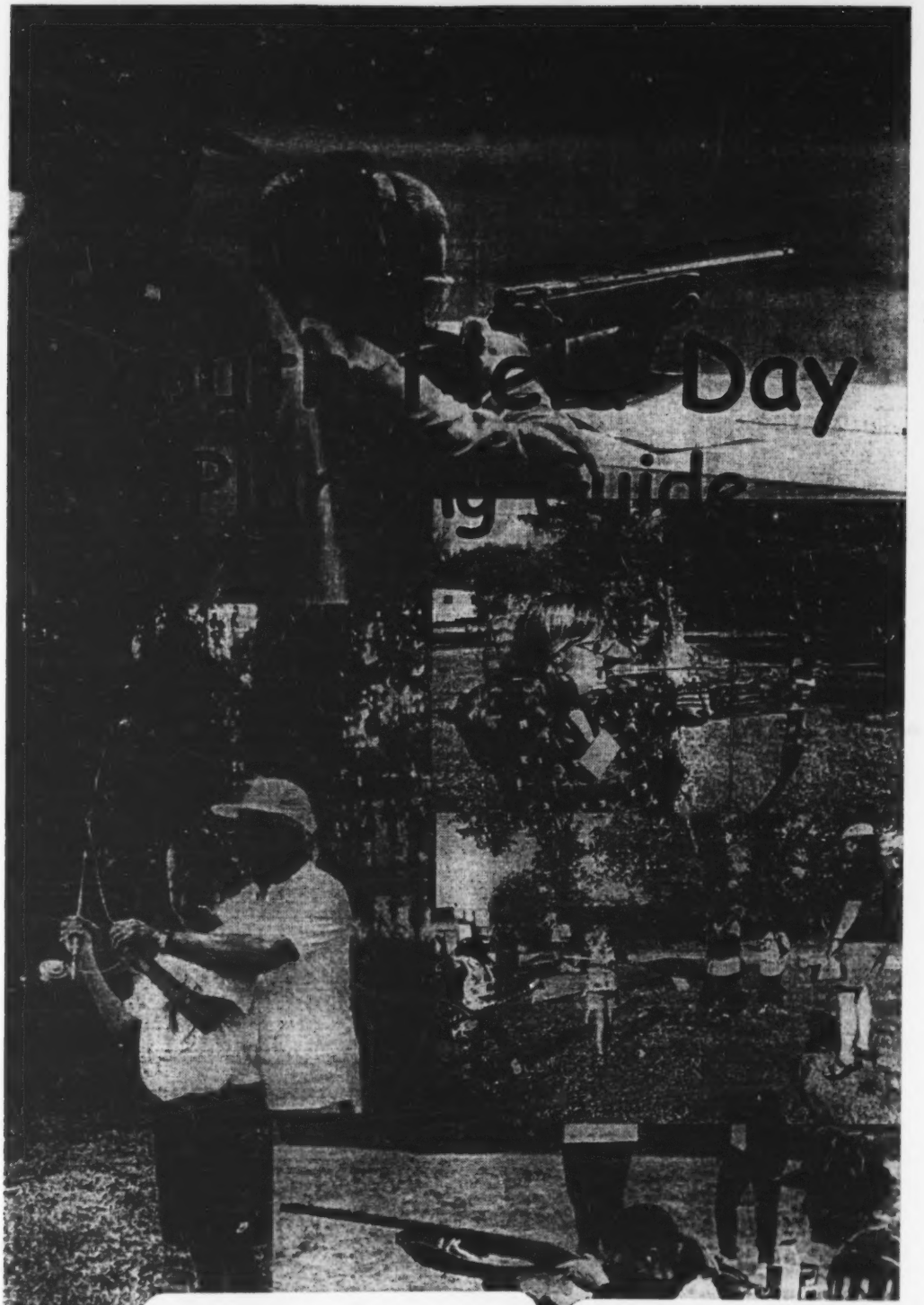
TITLE	Youth Field Day Planning Guide.
INSTITUTION	Wisconsin State Dept. of Natural Resources, Madison.
PUB DATE	1999-00-00
NOTE	17p.; "The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources would like to thank the Pennsylvania Game Commission for the content of this guide."
AVAILABLE FROM	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, 101 S. Webster St., Madison, WI 53702. Tel: 608-264-6279.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Cooperative Planning; Environmental Education; Field Instruction; *Nonschool Educational Programs; *Outdoor Activities; Recreational Activities; *Safety; Volunteers; *Youth Programs
IDENTIFIERS	Shooting Sports; *Sports Clubs

ABSTRACT

Youth field days expose children to outdoor activities, land use ethics, and habitat conservation and encourage adults to be mentors in these areas. A typical youth field day could have programs in archery, fishing, boating, shooting, or safety. The event requires a diverse steering committee that usually includes sporting clubs and state department of natural resources staff. At least three planning meetings should take place, starting 6 months in advance. The first meeting should cover where and when the event will be; how many participants can be accommodated; what activities will be held; event committee selection; and how the event will be publicized, paid for, and insured. The second meeting should include committee progress reports, where prizes and donations will be kept, how registration will be handled, ensuring that enough volunteers will be on hand, and offering exhibit/demonstration space to area organizations. Meeting number 3 will be about 2 weeks before the event date; committees should be able to assure that they are ready and should talk about safety, a primary concern. On the day of the event, an early morning meeting to review safety, registration, staff communication, and media coverage details will be helpful. Contributors and volunteers may be thanked at lunchtime, and a mid-afternoon rest is a good idea. A wrap-up meeting should be held within 2 weeks for tying up loose ends and review. (TD)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 455 979



RC 022682

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Keith Warnke

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

STATE OF WISCONSIN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
101 S. Webster Street, 5th floor, Madison, Wisconsin • 608-266-2121

George E. Meyer
Secretary

Dear Friend:

In Wisconsin, we have a strong heritage of natural resources conservation. Canoeing, hunting, fishing, trapping, and wildlife viewing are vital aspects of life in Wisconsin and the opportunities for these activities are abundant.

Yet, the trends in Wisconsin today show steady numbers of outdoor sportsmen and women, while the state's population continues to rise. The demographics of the state are shifting. More people are living in urban areas and fewer are exposed to outdoor activities in their youth. We have recognized a need to provide our state's youth with a greater number of outdoor recreational opportunities and increased natural resources education. In this pursuit, we call upon members of communities across the state, like you, to take active, participatory roles as mentors in resource use and conservation.

A fun and effective way for you to make a difference in youth's exposure to the outdoors is to organize a Youth Field Day in your community. This guide will help you plan a Youth Field Day. Plan activities like shooting, boating and fishing, as well as educational displays

and programs about the outdoor history of Wisconsin and the importance of land ethic and habitat conservation.

This guide will provide you with all of the important steps to take and key factors to keep in mind when planning your Youth Field Day. Remember, though, that this is only a guide, not a manual. Get creative with your Youth Field Day and definitely tap into resources in your area like hunting or fishing clubs, youth groups, and local DNR personnel. When deciding whether to plan an event, consider that while the planning process itself is time-consuming and may take months, the positive impression you leave on a group of young people will last lifetimes. Even if the youth who participate in your field day never actively participate in hunting, trapping or fishing, they will be more likely to support these activities in the future.

Thank you for your active contribution to the future of Wisconsin's outdoor heritage! Good luck, and HAVE FUN!!!

George E. Meyer

Establish the event committee

Your committee should consist of invited representatives of area sporting clubs, as well as representatives of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Look for people who are workers and have the ability to follow through with a successful event. This is a cooperative effort with room for everyone to share in the success. A good Youth Field Day belongs to everyone!

A successful Youth Field Day will require a minimum of three separate meetings of the full committee. In order to effectively plan a summertime event, the first meeting should be held in January or February.

MEETING #1

Where will your event be?

During your first meeting, you should decide where your Youth Field Day event will be held, and who will host it. In many instances, a local sportsmen's club will serve as the host for the event, since they generally have the facilities to safely accommodate the large number of people who generally attend this event. Key elements of a good facility are as follows:

- Lake, pond, or stream - for fishing, boating safety instruction, and possibly a retriever demonstration by a local sporting dog club.
- Shooting range - for .22 or air rifle shooting (could be indoor or outdoor)
- Large field - for claybird shooting (or could be held at the club's trap or skeet range)
- Several acres of additional land for outdoor exhibits
- A kitchen facility - very important for the feeding of hungry kids and volunteers!
- Restroom facilities
- Adequate area for parking of volunteer and parent vehicles

It is wise to schedule a visit to the proposed site by members of your committee in order to view first-hand the acceptability of the facilities. Photos or videos of the proposed site may be brought back to the full committee for consideration.

When are you going to have it?

Once a site has been agreed upon, you will need to reserve a date for the event. Secure approval of the date from the host club officers, and try to avoid scheduling conflicts with other youth events to be held in your area.

How many participants can you handle?

Now that you know where the event will be held, it is important to determine the number of participants the site can safely accommodate for the day. Given the proper facility and adequate volunteer assistance, it would not be unusual to expect anywhere from 150-300 excited youngsters to show up at your event! Determine the number well in advance, and stick to it. Limit yourselves to a number that you know you can comfortably handle - the success of your event depends upon it.

What activities will you plan?

Next, the committee should decide which activities and exhibits the kids would enjoy, and who will be responsible for the set-up and instruction at each station. Typically, each Youth Field Day includes archery, fishing, boating instruction, and shooting (.22, air rifle, shotgun, and/or muzzleloader). Although these are suggested activities, your committee may decide to add or subtract from this list, depending on available facilities and manpower. Most successful Youth Field Day events also include a wide variety of demonstrations and exhibits. Fly-tying and casting, field dogs, survival skills, flint-napping, decoy carving, game calling - the list is endless! There are many talented people in your area that would be more than willing to spend a day with the kids, instructing them about the outdoor pursuit they love.

Who's responsible for what?

Now you are ready to share the responsibility for a successful event by forming your event committees. You should begin by designating an event chair, or more than one co-chair. The Chair or Co-chairs will have the primary responsibility for the overall coordination of the event. They will be assisted by

committee chairs and volunteers for each of the following areas:

- Advertising/Promotion
- Donations/Prizes
- Registration
- Events
- Finance
- Exhibits
- Food

Once the committees are appointed, each committee must explore its mission and be given the latitude to develop its plans accordingly.

The person responsible for a particular event, such as muzzleloader shooting, should begin by soliciting assistance from the local muzzleloader club, or from other black-powder enthusiasts who are known to be safe, ethical hunters and who may be willing to give of their time and talents. The members of the committee should then familiarize themselves with the area of the club grounds designated for their use. Equipment needs must then be determined (200 kids times 2 shots at 50 grams FF powder each) plus patches, round balls, priming powder, shooting glasses, hearing protection - you get the idea. How many rifles need to be available on site? How many volunteers will be needed at this station to insure that there is not a lot of down time while the rifles are being reloaded or cleaned? Is there a safe backstop? Do you have the targets - silhouette or maybe balloons? The committees for each event in your Youth Field Day will need to anticipate every need, then plan for it.

How do you publicize your event?

How will you get the word out to the kids about your Youth Field Day? Several ways we have found to be successful are:

- Posters
- Radio
- News Releases
- Letters to Schools
- Newspaper Ads
- Talks to local fraternal and service clubs
- Local cable TV
- Through local hunter education courses

How are you going to pay for it?

This first meeting of your Youth Field Day committee is also a good time to talk about money. As you are well aware, an

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

event of this type will require funding to cover the expenses associated with it. If you give each kid a T-shirt or a hat, who will pay for it? Who will pay for 600 hot dogs and 20 cases of soda? Who will cover the cost of claybirds and shotgun shells? Obviously, you will either need to raise funds for the event through a fund-raising effort, from local donations, or from a combination of both. We have found that local businesses are very enthusiastic about donations for youth events - the key is to explain the reasons for your Youth Field Day event, solicit their involvement, and be sure to thank them appropriately for their support. A solicitation letter from your committee is advisable - every volunteer involved in your Youth Field Day should have a supply of these letters to hand to potential donors.

Are you insured?

Insurance for your event is another important aspect of your first meeting. Do not hold a Youth Field Day without the proper form of coverage for your event! Most sportsmen's clubs will have insurance that will cover risk exposure to the participants and the volunteers on the day of your event. If the club does not have existing coverage for this type of activity, you will need to secure a rider to the club's policy, or else seek an insurance carrier that will be willing to write a special form of coverage for your committee that will also extend to the host club. Once liability coverage has been secured (in writing!!!), you are well on your way to a successful Youth Field Day event!

Well, it's been a very productive first meeting - set the date for your next meeting, and let the committees get to work!

Meeting #2

The second meeting should be held on the host club's grounds, and should begin with a walking tour. Now that the host club has had the opportunity for input, it's time for a progress report from each committee.

Where will you keep prizes/donations?

Every person present should have something to report to the donation/prize committee. Whenever a cash donation is col-

lected, it should be handed over to the treasurer or chairman of the finance committee. Donations of merchandise should be turned over to a host club member of the committee for safe storage at the club grounds.

How will participants register?

Event registration is a very important part of the Youth Field Day - without proper planning, the day will be off to a very unorganized start! A well-organized preregistration procedure will be well worth the time and effort, and will avoid a lot of grumbling about long lines, lost applications, and misinformation.

After the Youth Field Day event has been adequately publicized, parents wishing to register their children may call the committee member in charge of registration who will note the parents' names and addresses. The committee member will then send a registration packet to the parents, including the following information:

- Parental consent form
- Registration form to request youth's age, experience, interest, T-shirt size, etc.
- A self-addressed stamped envelope
- Informational sheet about the Youth Field Day and what is expected of the participants
- Directions to the host club's grounds

A parent or guardian is required to mail in the parental consent form and the registration form to register the youth for the event.

A second method of registration would require a registration coupon that is part of a newspaper advertisement. The coupon would be mailed to a member of the registration committee. Other forms of registration may be used, as determined by the registration committee.

Once the maximum number of registrations has been received, a list of the participants can be arranged in alphabetical

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

order and available for use by the committee at the door the day of the event.

Do you have enough volunteers for all of the events?

There should be qualified instructors for one-on-one coaching at each event. We have found that the easiest and safest method of moving the kids from station to station is by use of an adult group leader who is responsible for a group of 10 youths. The group leader will accompany each group throughout the day and is responsible for the care and safety of the youths under their supervision at all times. Each leader is provided with a map of the club grounds, which indicates the location of each event, restroom facility, and first aid station. The group leader will assemble his/her group, and move to the next available activity. If another group is already involved in the activity, the group leader must insure that those under their care stand back and out of harm's way until the station instructors are ready for their group.

Questions, questions, questions...

- How many volunteers will be available the day before the event to assist in set-up activities on the club grounds? Who will be available for clean up after the event?
- Do you have representatives from your area DNR office involved in the overall planning? If not, make another effort to contact them - they are key players in this event.
- Have you contacted area sportsmen's organizations to offer space for them to set up and staff an exhibit/demonstration area?
- Has the food committee made arrangements to secure the food, beverage, and ice for the event, as well as a number of volunteers to prepare and serve it?
- Have you arranged for the local ambulance service or EMTs to be on hand the day of the event?
- Who will direct traffic to the appropriate parking spaces?

And just a reminder...

Did you write a letter of inquiry to the host's club's insurance carrier to determine if you are properly insured? Do you have a written assurance of this coverage?

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Meeting #3

Now that the event is only two weeks away, you need to determine whether you have reached your maximum registration number. If not, it's time to re-advertise.

All committees should report on their responsibilities and be able to assure that they are ready to go with their respective activity. Now is the time to go over everything - food, parking, first aid, media coverage, signs, eye and ear protection, barrier tape, portable toilets, trash barrels, station equipment needs, club grounds preparation (grass-cutting, removal of safety hazards), bait, life jackets, and everything else that the committee members can think of.

SAFETY!!!

Now is the time to talk about safety. Safety should be the primary concern of each and every member of the Youth Field Day committee. Be sure that eye and ear protection is available at all shooting stations. Be sure that you have qualified, competent instructors at all stations. Prevent kids from entering into the line of fire by securing these areas with highly visible barrier tape. Stress the importance of safety to all group leaders and participants before they go out on the course. Make sure that everyone knows where the first aid stations are located. Make sure you have plenty of water on the course to prevent dehydration. Make sure that all field equipment is in good working order.

Do not permit Youth Field Day participants (parents and kids) to bring their own guns, bows, or other field equipment to the event. You provide all equipment and ammunition free of charge - that is the safest method!

Realize your opportunities for education - these kids are looking to you for proper instruction on the safe handling of field equipment!

By now, excitement is building and you are anxiously awaiting the day of your event. You should also be experiencing the personal satisfaction that team building brings as you work co-

operatively with other field enthusiasts to make this event memorable for the kids!!!

The Big Day!

You and other members of the host club and your Youth Field Day committee spent much of yesterday making final adjustments at the host club facility. It's now 6:30a.m. on the day of the event and you and the embers of the event staff hold your final meeting. Safety is always your primary concern: one-on-one coaching by qualified instructors, only one shell at a time, muzzle always pointed downrange, barrier tape is in place, eye and ear protection is in place, EMTs are ready to go.

How will you register participants?

Even though you have indicated that registration will not start until 8:00a.m., you can expect that eager kids will be lined up at least a half-hour before the appointed time. Your registration committee should be prepared for these early arrivals - three lines, A-I, J-R, and S-Z. As a group of ten participants is assembled, introduce them to their group leader for the day. Each group leader should have a map of the club grounds with event locations listed. They should also carry some type of sign with a number clearly marked that corresponds with the group number that has been assigned to kids in the group - this method works well when kids are temporarily separated from their group. Remember that parents of participants may offer to serve as a group leader or help out with kitchen duties. Involve these parents - their help can be invaluable!

How will staff communicate during the day?

Portable radios for use by key event staff is strongly suggested. This will insure that direct lines of communication are open so that emergency personnel can be summoned should the need arise. In addition, use of radios will help to identify the stations that are currently open so that a group waiting at another station can be summoned to fill in the gap.

Is everything running smoothly?

Typically, groups move around the course at their own speed, usually allowing about ½ hour at each activity. The Chair or Co-Chairs should be available to travel throughout the club grounds during the entire day, making sure that events are running smoothly and that supply needs are met.

Do not permit any vehicles other than emergency vehicles in the activity areas of the club grounds. For safety's sake, all travel throughout the day is on foot.

At this point, things are running well according to the "master plan". Canoes glide across the lake, the crack of .22s can be heard from the rifle range, and there is a flurry of activity at the fishing pond. The food committee will soon begin preparation of the noon-time meal, and should be checking to see that all the water igloos on the grounds are filled (you'll be surprised at the quantity of water consumed by the kids that day!).

Have you assured media coverage of your event?

Hopefully, contacts that you have made previously with media representatives have resulted in their attendance at today's event. Invite these media representatives to travel with the Chairs throughout the club grounds to photograph and record interviews with kids, parents, and event staff. You will have "missed the boat" if the only people who know about the positive impressions of the day's events are the participants. As concerned sportsmen, we all need to get the word out to the public on the quality outdoor experience that we are providing to the kids!!!

Thanks to the contributors!

The Donations Committee should have the "thank-you board" up for viewing by all Youth Field Day participants, so that they may identify the donors whose generosity make this event possible. Be sure to thank all the donors at the group gathering at lunch, and ask kids and parents to support these businesses and individuals when they make their purchasing decisions.

Hungry?

Lunchtime is a welcome break in the day's activities. It's also a great time to recognize your volunteer staff and thank everyone for their participation. Encourage the youth to pursue their favorite activity by asking for permission from Mom or Dad for them to become involved in the local youth shooting program or archery instruction. Encourage the youth to talk openly with their parents about their outdoor interests and suggest that they participate in Wisconsin's Hunter/Trapper Education program when they become of age.

Before you release the groups to return to the field to resume their activities (either the ones they haven't yet participated in, or the ones that they want to participate in again), request that the group leaders guide their respective groups back to a central area at a predetermined time (possibly 3:00p.m.) for distribution of prizes.

Tired?

By mid afternoon, both participants and volunteers will be slightly worn out, but pleasantly excited, from the day's events. This is a good time to distribute a treat for each youth (an ice-cream sandwich or a can of pop) and encourage them to relax on the grass as you begin the prize distribution.

Prizes!

Prizes are a fun way of winding down the day, but are always optional. If you chose to have prizes, the type and number is limited only by the generosity of your donors or the size of your checking account. Fishing rods, tackle boxes, wildlife art prints, and miscellaneous sporting goods make excellent prizes. Another idea to consider is the awarding of youth memberships to area sportsmen's clubs - not only will that get the youth actively involved, but will also require a parent or guardian to accompany the youth and also become involved!

Although every youth present would love to receive a prize, remember that the focus of the day is on the fun of the activity, not on the number and quality of prizes available. It is suggested that you limit the number of prizes to no more than 20% of the number of youth in attendance. There is not nearly as

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

much disappointment with a smaller number of prizes - the number of kids who didn't win a prize far outnumbers those who did receive a prize. You and your committee need to determine what will work best for you.

At the conclusion of the Youth Field Day, thank everyone (especially the volunteers and donors!) again.

You can now send the kids on their way, confident that most have developed a new-found enthusiasm for the outdoors, and it happened because of your dedication and commitment to a worthy goal - the outdoor education of our youth!

Wrap-up Meeting

It is important to hold a wrap-up meeting of your Youth Field Day committee within two weeks after your event. If you wait much longer than two weeks, it may not take place at all.

This meeting is a great opportunity to tie up loose ends - send thank you letters to all those who helped to make the day a large success, return equipment, pay bills, and talk about next year's event.

Rarely does a Youth Field Day occur without a few glitches. Now is the time for committee members to critique the day's happenings, determine the cause of any problems, and suggest solutions to the problem so it doesn't occur next time.

Take some time to let your committee members share some of their personal experiences which occurred that day with the youth - or their parents.

Most of all, experience the personal satisfaction of knowing that you may have affected in a positive manner, for years to come, the life of a youth!

Take a youth hunting!

Look for the Learn to Hunt brochure coming soon! For information on Learn to Hunt programs, contact

Keith Warnke, WM/4
Wisconsin DNR
101 S. Webster Street
Madison, WI 53702
warnkk@dnr.state.wi.us
(608) 264-6023

OR

MaryKay Salway
Wisconsin DNR
Courthouse, Box 8
Alma, WI 54610
Salwem@dnr.stat.wi.us
(608) 685-3744

Invite a friend to STEP OUTSIDE!™

For information on introducing a friend to the outdoors, contact

STEP OUTSIDE™
11 Mile Hill Road
Newton, CT 06470-2359
Web Site: www.stepoutside.org

For a copy of this document, contact

Jen Patterson, CE/6
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
101 S. Webster St.
Madison, WI 53702
pattej@dnr.state.wi.us
(608) 264-6279

SPORT FISH & WILDLIFE RESTORATION

Federal Aid Project
funded by your purchase of hunting and fishing equipment and motor boat fuels

WISCONSIN DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides equal opportunity in its employment, programs, services, and functions under an Affirmative Action Plan. If you have any questions, please write to Equal Opportunity Office, Department of Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

This publication is available in alternative format (large print, Braille, audio tape, etc.) upon request. Please call Jen Patterson at (608)264-6279 for more information.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources would like to thank the Pennsylvania Game Commission for the content of this guide.

PUB-CE-266 99

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
PO Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707-7921

BULK RATE
US POSTAGE
PAID
MADISON, WI
PERMIT 906